

REMARKS

This Response addresses the issues raised by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed March 24, 2006. Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the allowance of Claims 25 and 26 and for the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 4, 5, 7, 9, 15, 16, 18 and 20. Also, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended during the telephone interview with Applicants' representative on May 18, 2006. In view of the following remarks, Applicants believe that all outstanding issues have been addressed and prompt allowance of all remaining claims is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-46 are pending in this application, wherein claims 3 and 14 are being amended to more particularly point and distinctly claim the subject invention, and new claims 27-46 are hereby submitted for consideration. All the amendments to the claims are fully supported in the specification, including but not limited to Figures 13-15, and page 26, lines 13-16.

Additional Amendments

The specification is being amended to correct a typographical error. Specifically, the specification is being amended to replace the phrase "cutting off" with "passing through" so as to make the recitation of page 20, line 18 to page 21, line 3 consistent with the remainder of the disclosure of the invention, including but not limited to page 19, line 28. It is submitted that no new matter is being introduced through the submission of the above-outlined amendments in this response.

Allowed Subject Matter and the 3/24/2006 Office Action

In the March 24, 2006, Office Action, the Examiner allowed Claims 25 and 26. In the Reasons for Allowance, the Examiner indicated that "the primary reason for allowance is the inclusion of the combination of a perpendicular magnetic recording medium having a[n] equalization circuit which performs a process of suppressing a low-frequency component including a direct current component in reproduced signals output from the reproducing head." See Office Action at 6. Applicants agree with the Examiner that this combination (low frequency component including a DC component) is both novel and non-obvious.

However, each of the remaining (rejected) independent claims (Claims 1 and 12) also

contain these limitations. For example, Claim 1 includes the limitation: "wherein a reproduced signal outputted from said reproducing head is processed through a partial response equalization circuit having a frequency characteristic so that a low-frequency component of said reproduced signal including a direct current component is passed and suppressed through said partial response equalization circuit." Likewise, Claim 12 includes the identical limitation. Clearly, the two remaining independent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claims 25 and 26 were allowed. In an effort to bring this prosecution to a successful conclusion, Applicants' representative requested a telephonic interview with the Examiner to discuss this apparent discrepancy.

The May 18, 2006 Interview

Applicants' representative held a telephone interview with the Examiner on May 18, 2006. During the interview, Applicants' representative reviewed the above-referenced Reasons for Allowance with the Examiner, and showed the Examiner that the very same limitations stated as the Reasons for Allowance also appeared in the rejected independent claims (Claims 1 and 12). The Examiner reviewed the remaining independent claims and agreed that these claims, including the limitations stated in the Reasons for Allowance, also appeared to be patentable. The Examiner indicated that the rejection of these claims appeared to be an oversight, possibly due to the fact that the "direct current" limitation of Claims 1 and 12 was overlooked at the time of examination.

Given that all claims were in condition for final allowance, Applicants' representative inquired of the Examiner as to how best to proceed. The Examiner indicated that Applicants should file a written response to the outstanding Office Action confirming the discussion that Applicants' representative and the Examiner had by telephone. Based on the above discussion and the interview, it is believed that Claims 1-26 are in condition for final allowance, and prompt notice to such effect is respectfully requested.

New Claims 27-46

In this response, Applicants have also included new Claims 27-46 which more particularly distinguish the present invention from the cited prior art. Since these claims track previously allowed claims, these new Claims 27-46 are allowable for the same reasons as the previous claims, and no new matter is inserted into the prosecution by these claims.

The Cited Prior Art

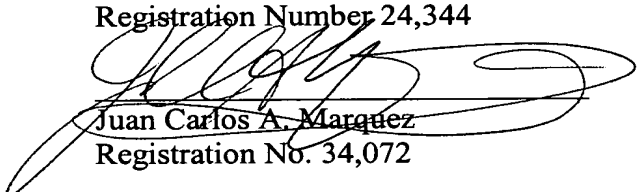
There can be no question that the previously-allowed claims as well as the new Claims 27-46 distinguish from the cited prior art. In fact, the Taguchi reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,986,987) specifically states an important difference from the present invention. Specifically, at column 17, lines 61-67, Taguchi states that "the reproduction signal of the optical disk has a frequency band including a DC component. An actual circuit for processing the reproduction signal limits, to eliminate influence of DC offset, the frequency band to that from which low frequencies including the DC band are eliminated." Clearly, the Examiner's analysis of this art is correct, and all claims are in condition for final allowance.

Conclusion

The above claim amendments and accompanying remarks address each and every concern raised by the Examiner in the Office Action. Applicants believe that all remaining claims of the present invention are now in condition for final allowance. If the Examiner feels that any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' attorney at the contact information below.

Respectfully submitted,

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